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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/509,808	08/24/2000	Roland Fischer	F-6485	9821

7590 02/17/2004

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1774

DATE MAILED: 02/17/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/509,808	FISCHER ET AL. 
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Lawrence D Ferguson	1774

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 1/15/04.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 24-31 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 24-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This action is in response to the amendment mailed January 15, 2004.

Examiner regrets the untimely reopening of the case and withdraws the previous rejections to further prosecute the claimed invention. Claims 24-31 are pending, with claims 32-46 withdrawn from consideration.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103(a)

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 24-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto (U.S. 5,484,685).

Hashimoto discloses a wood block, where the lignin in the wood structure is melted (column 4, lines 5-8 and lines 58-61) and the oil and fat components of wood are melted (column 6, lines 1-5). The melted lignin in the wood's cell structure ensures the coloring of the wood with a dye that can penetrate deep into the wood's interior (column 5, lines 1-7) where the melted lignin of the wood is physically altered from its original state. In instant claim 25, the phrase "cell walls melted in one or several cutting

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directions" introduces a process limitation to the product claim. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." In re Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966. Further, process limitations are given no patentable weight in product claims. Hashimoto is silent as to the wood melts being free from pyrolytic degradation as per instant claim 24. Since no such degradation is disclosed as being present, the limitation of claim 24 is met. Although Hashimoto does not explicitly disclose the melted areas having a higher hardness and abrasion resistance than the non-melted wood as in instant claim 27, the claimed hardness and abrasion resistance are directly related to the melted wood parts. Since Hashimoto teaches the same components as Applicant, these features would be expected, absent any evidence to the contrary.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103(a)

4. Claims 24-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto (U.S. 5,784,805).

Hashimoto discloses a wood block, where the lignin in the wood structure is melted (column 4, lines 5-9 and lines 59-61) and the oil and fat components of wood are melted (column 6, lines 1-5). The melted lignin in the wood's cell structure ensures the coloring of the wood with a dye that can penetrate deep into the wood's interior (column

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5, lines 1-9) where the melted lignin of the wood is physically altered from its original state. In instant claim 25, the phrase “cell walls melted in one or several cutting directions” introduces a process limitation to the product claim. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process.” In re Thorpe, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966. Further, process limitations are given no patentable weight in product claims. Hashimoto is silent as to the wood melts being free from pyrolytic degradation as per instant claim 24. Since no such degradation is disclosed as being present, the limitation of claim 24 is met. Although Hashimoto does not explicitly disclose the melted areas having a higher hardness and abrasion resistance than the non-melted wood as in instant claim 27, the claimed hardness and abrasion resistance are directly related to the melted wood parts. Since Hashimoto teaches the same components as Applicant, these features would be expected, absent any evidence to the contrary.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments of rejection under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Razi et al. (U.S. 5,417,904) have been considered and are moot based on grounds of new rejection.

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Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lawrence Ferguson whose telephone number is 571-272-1522. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9:00 AM – 5:30PM.

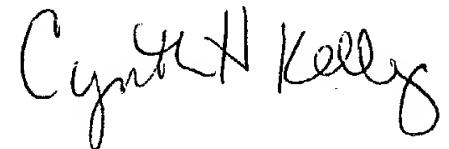
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cynthia Kelly, can be reached on 571-272-1526. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Lawrence D. Ferguson
Examiner
Art Unit 1774

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Cynthia H. Kelly